

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----007043 091522Z /46

O R 091355Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2803  
INFO NSC  
CIA  
NASA  
SECDEF  
JCS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 HELSINKI 1811

EXDIS

US ASAT DELEGATION NO. 001

MILITARY ADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

NASA FOR KRUEGER

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3  
TAGS: PARM  
SUBJ: ASAT NEGOTIATIONS, OPENING MEETING, JUNE 8

SUMMARY. FIRST ROUND OF US-SOVIET TALKS ON ANTI-SATELLITE (ASAT) SYSTEMS OPENED FORMALLY JUNE 8 WITH MEETING AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN HELSINKI. OPENING SESSION, WHICH US SIDE HAD EXPECTED TO BE BRIEF EXCHANGE OF FORMAL STATEMENTS, DEVELOPED INTO A TWO AND A HALF HOUR, SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE CENTRAL ISSUES IN ASAT ARMS LIMITATION. WE BELIEVE FIRST MEETING SETS STAGE FOR USEFUL AND PRODUCTIVE TALKS ON ASAT ARMS CONTROL.

ACDA DIRECTOR WARNKE, HEAD OF US DELEGATION, EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF SATELLITES TO BOTH SIDES. HE

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NOTED SOVIET EXPERIMENTS WITH ASAT SYSTEM, AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT US WOULD MATCH SOVIET ASAT CAPABILITY IF THE TWO SIDES COULD NOT WORK OUT AN EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENT PROHIBITING THE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF SIGNIFICANT ASAT CAPABILITIES. WARNKE EMPHASIZED US INTEREST IN A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD LIMIT ANTI-SATELLITE CAPABILITIES AND THE USE OF ASAT

DEVICES, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT TWO SIDES COULD ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE IN A FASHION WHICH WOULD PRECLUDE ANY SIGNIFICANT ASYMMETRY IN ASAT CAPABILITY.

SOVIET SIDE, LED BY MFA TREATY AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT CHIEF KHLESTOV, BASICALLY TOOK STANCE OF ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT US POSITION. HOWEVER, KHLESTOV SAID THAT USSR HAS SERIOUS INTEREST IN DISCUSSING ASAT ARMS CONTROL, AND REFERRED HYPOTHETICALLY TO A US-SOVIET AGREEMENT. KHLESTOV FOCUSED ON MEANING OF "HOSTILE ACTS, ASPECT OF US POSITION, ASKING PERSISTENTLY ABOUT MEANING AND COVERAGE OF TERMS. SOVIETS MADE SPECIAL POINT OF ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY WHETHER US POSITION ON HOSTILE ACTS ALLOWED EXCEPTION FOR SHUTTLE, AND SPECIFICALLY WHETHER DISPLACEMENT OF SOVIET SATELLITE FROM ORBIT BY THE SHUTTLE WOULD BE CONSIDERED A HOSTILE ACT. SOVIETS ALSO ASKED IF HOSTILE ACT WOULD REFER TO MORE THAN DESTRUCTION OF OR DAMAGE TO SATELLITE, AND WHAT TYPES OF SYSTEMS WOULD BE INCLUDED, POSSIBLY PROBING FOR US POSITION ON LASERS AND ELECTRONIC WARFARE. SOVIETS AVOIDED DISCUSSION OF OTHER MAIN ELEMENT OF US POSITION, CONCERNING LIMITATIONS ON ASAT CAPABILITIES, THOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD IT. SOVIETS DID NOT RESPOND TO US REMARKS ABOUT THEIR ASAT TESTING. SOVIETS POINTED OUT THAT LEAKS TO PRESS COULD PREVENT PROGRESS IN TALKS. SECOND MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 9. END SUMMARY

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1. WARNKE OPENED FIRST SESSION WITH PREPARED STATEMENT (SEPTEL). KHLESTOV, REFERRING TO ASAT TALKS AS CONSULTATIONS, USED AS STARTING POINT THE QUESTION OF PREVENTING HOSTILE ACTS AGAINST SPACE OBJECTS. AFTER CITING SOVIET DISARMAMENT RECORD AND EXISTING INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS (E.G. OUTER SPACE TREATY), KHLESTOV CALLED FOR MORE DETAILED EXPOSURE OF US POSITION. WARNKE COUNTERED BY ASKING IF SOVIETS SHARED US OBJECTIVE OF A COMPREHENSIVE ASAT AGREEMENT. POINTING OUT THAT USSR HAS EXPERIMENTED WITH ASAT SYSTEMS AND THAT US COULD MATCH SOVIET CAPABILITIES, WARNKE SAID THAT US AND USSR HAVE A CHOICE BETWEEN (1) FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ASAT SYSTEMS BY BOTH SIDES, MAKING ARMS LIMITATION MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND POSSIBLY LEADING TO "BROBDIGNAGIN SKEET SHOOT," OR (2) EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENT PROHIBITING DEVELOPMENT OR RETENTION OF SIGNIFICANT ASAT CAPABILITIES. NOTING THAT NEITHER SIDE WOULD ALLOW THE OTHER TO HAVE A MONOPOLY IN THIS AREA, WARNKE SAID INTERESTS OF BOTH BEST SERVED BY AGREEMENT LIMITING NOT ONLY ASAT USE, BUT DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF ASAT CAPABILITIES.

IF TWO SIDES AGREED ONLY TO PRECLUDE ASAT USE, BOTH SIDES WOULD DEVELOP FORMIDABLE CAPACITY TO DESTROY SATELLITES. THIS WOULD NOT ENHANCE STRATEGIC STABILITY OR IMPROVED INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. WARNKE SAID THAT, WHILE US SIDE DID NOT COME WITH FULLY DEVELOPED CONCRETE PROPOSALS, WE WOULD HAVE IDEAS OF A MORE SPECIFIC NATURE TO DISCUSS.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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O R 091355Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2804  
INFO NSC  
CIA  
NASA  
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2. KHELSTOV CHARACTERIZED MAIN ELEMENTS OF US POSITION AS (1) CURB HOSTILE ACTIONS AGAINST SPACE OBJECTS; (2) NOT TO DEVELOP NEW ASAT SYSTEMS (THEREBY IMPLYING EXCLUSION OF PRESENT SOVIET INTERCEPTOR). KHELSTOV THEN BEGAN PERSISTENT QUESTIONING OF WHAT US MEANT BY HOSTILE ACTS, ASKING IF THIS INCLUDED ACTS BY SPACE-BASED AS WELL AS EARTH-BASED SYSTEMS. WARNKE SAID WE MEANT ALL ASAT DEVICES, AND THAT WE PROPOSED BASING DEFINITION OF HOSTILE ACT ON DAMAGE TO OR DESTRUCTION OF SATELLITE. KHELSTOV ASKED IF DISPLACEMENT FROM ORBIT OF THE SPACE OBJECT OF ONE STATE BY ANOTHER STATE WOULD BE A HOSTILE ACT, AND IF RESTRICTIONS ON ASAT SYSTEMS WOULD APPLY TO ANY SYSTEM THAT COULD COMMIT HOSTILE ACTS. (US DELEGATION INTENDS TO TELL SOVIETS THAT WE WOULD REGARD THE DISPLACEMENT FROM ORBIT OR CAPTURE OF THE SPACE OBJECT OF ONE SIDE BY THE OTHER SIDE AS AN ACT WHICH SHOULD BE PROHIBITED.) WARNKE NOTED THAT THERE COULD BE SYSTEMS WHOSE INTENT

AND PRIMARY PURPOSE WERE NOT FOR ASAT USE, BUT WHICH  
COULD HAVE ASAT CAPABILITIES. BOTH SIDES HAVE PROJECTS  
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OF THIS KIND, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE OPTIMUM, COST-EFFECTIVE ASAT SYSTEMS. NEITHER SIDE WANTS TO GIVE UP PEACEFUL SPACE SYSTEMS WITH ECONOMIC BENEFITS; WE SHOULD PERMIT BENIGN ACTIVITIES. KHLESTOV SAID AN OBLIGATION WOULD BE NECESSARY PROHIBITING THE USE OF ANY SPACE OBJECT FOR HOSTILE PURPOSES. WARNKE SAID THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT, BUT ADDED THAT LIMITATIONS ON USE WOULD NOT PREVENT AN ARMS RACE. WARNKE SAID THAT US DOES NOT CONSIDER SHUTTLE TO BE AN ASAT SYSTEM, BUT AGREED THAT INTENT WAS TO PRECLUDE HOSTILE ACTS REGARDLESS OF SYSTEM. SOME SYSTEMS WOULD HAVE MARGINAL ASAT CAPABILITY; AS LONG AS EACH OF US RETAINED THE CAPABILITY TO PUT OBJECTS IN SPACE, WE WOULD HAVE RESIDUAL POTENTIAL TO DAMAGE OBJECTS IN SPACE. THE POINT IS TO NOT DEVELOP A UNIQUE ASAT CAPABILITY AND A FAMILY OF WEAPONS WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO DAMAGE SATELLITES. WARNKE MADE CLEAR THAT SHUTTLE ITSELF WOULD NOT BE PROHIBITED. TO EXTENT NON-ASAT SYSTEMS HAVE RESIDUAL ASAT CAPABILITY, WE SEEK AGREEMENT THAT THEY WILL NOT BE USED AGAINST SATELLITES. WARNKE AGREED THAT THERE COULD BE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH USE OF A NON-ASAT SYSTEM COULD BE A HOSTILE ACT. KHLESTOV ASKED IF DESTRUCTION REFERRED ONLY TO WHOLE SATELLITE, OR ALSO TO ONBOARD EQUIPMENT. WARNKE SAID PHYSICALLY DAMAGING THE OTHER SIDE'S SATELLITE WOULD BE PROHIBITED. IN RESPONSE TO KHLESTOV'S QUESTION, WARNKE SAID PROHIBITION WOULD APPLY TO ANYTHING WHICH RESULTS IN DAMAGE TO OR DESTRUCTION OF SATELLITE.

3. IN RESPONSE TO KHLESTOV QUESTION ABOUT VERIFICATION, WARNKE SAID ANY AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LIMITS OF VERIFICATION. MOST ASAT

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DEVICES WOULD BE SPECIALIZED AND WOULD BEHAVE IN VERIFIABLE WAYS. THERE ALSO IS THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING VERIFICATION BY THE INSTALLATION OF NEW DEVICES. POSSIBLE COOPERATIVE MEASURES TO SUPPLEMENT NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS SHOULD BE ON THE AGENDA OF THESE TALKS.

4. KHLESTOV CLOSED BY EMPHASIZING SOVIETS SERIOUS ABOUT ASAT TALKS, BUT NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND THINK OVER US POSITION. KHLESTOV SAID US SIDE HAD RAISED ISSUES ON WHICH SOVIETS WERE NOT WELL PREPARED AND WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THOUGHT. SOVIETS WANT TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS, PARTICULARLY ON DISPLACEMENT FROM ORBIT. THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE US HAS QUESTIONS TO ASK THE USSR.

5. FULL RECORD OF THIS MEETING WILL BE REPORTED BY AIRGRAM.

6. DELEGATIONS HAVE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN ON FRIDAY, JUNE 9.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014